The Crowd Was Pleased

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***{excerpt} Dušan Týnek presents***

The most choreographically sophisticated work on the program was Dušan Týnek’s Fleur-de-lis. Not only was he more inventive in his movement and rhythms than the other two artists, but also he could create transitions that were part of the fabric of the dance rather than filler runs and walks. He also chose challenging music, three ecstatically beautiful violin pieces by Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber, and he met that invitation with skill and sensitivity. This quartet for Alexandra Berger, Elisa Osborne, Satoshi Takao and the choreographer required dancers with intelligence and technical chops. All four danced his intricate and ever shifting choreography well but Mr. Týnek’s expressive control of phrasing made his difficult steps appear effortless and the music as if emanating from him.

Throughout the piece, the four dancers coupled and uncoupled in ever changing shared weight partnering creating beautiful and surprising dynamic shapes. More often than not the images would be in duplicate, both couples doing the same shapes. Though the neutral toned costuming was gendered, the women in skirts and camisole tops and the men in shirts and pants, the partnering was not always heterosexual. But these encounters were not romantic or dramatic; rather the work was sculptural and abstract yet playfully human. One marveled, in these exchanges, at how many ways Mr. Týnek could explore the fleur-de-lis pattern of peeling away arcs from supporting stems; the soles of feet supported on an arced forearm, a curled body beneath the plank of another. As wonderful as they were, but the last section to von Biber’s exquisite Passacaglia, one wanted something else to happen. Though briefly the pattern shifted to three against one dancer, with sudden arrests in the movement, and at another time all came together in a quartet shaping, these episodes were left too soon and the coupled partnering returned. It was a bit like too much candy and, despite its intention, the last section ran a little out of developmental steam making the final sinking to the floor by all four on the sides feel arbitrary. However, the piece had many riches in dancing and in its energetic interplay with the music and among the dancers. It is refreshing to see a choreographer today who still relishes beautiful and complex step making and invests in defining its particulars.